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ABSTRACT

The largest single federal investment in schooling, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 103-382) has provided supplementary resources to schools with large numbers of low-income students throughout the past three decades. In 1994 the program was reauthorized according to the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), which carries with it a number of revised legislative expectations even as it increases the number of schools eligible to operate schoolwide programs. The new legislation expands opportunities for schools operating schoolwide programs to integrate their services, strategies, and resources to reform their entire educational programs. This document provides an overview of the legislative intent and expectation of the Schoolwide Program Provisions of the IASA. Summary statements are given in shaded boxes, and these statements are followed by questions that administrators, teachers, and other school staff can use to reflect on their activities in the context of what is expected by the legislation. Information on basic programs and procedural components is followed by material about legislative expectations in the areas of: (1) student performance; (2) state standards and assessments; (3) curriculum and instruction; (4) professional development; (5) parent and community involvement; and (6) resource flexibility, system supports, and accountability. (Contains three references.) (Author/SLD)

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An Overview of

TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAMS: FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE EXPECTATIONS

Outlined in the Improving America's Schools Act
of the 1994 Amendments to Title I of the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

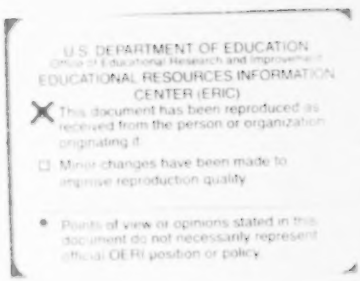
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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

I. Basic Programmatic and Procedural Components of Schoolwide Programs 2

II. Additional Legislative Expectations 4

A. Student Performance 4

B. State Standards and Assessments 4

C. Curriculum and Instruction 5

D. Professional Development 6

E. Parent and Community Involvement 7

F. Resource Flexibility, System Supports, and Accountability 8

Concluding Remarks 9

Sources 10

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INTRODUCTION

The largest single federal investment in schooling, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [P.L. 103-382], has provided supplementary resources to schools with large numbers of low-income students throughout the past three decades. In FY 1997, for example, the program allocated almost $8 billion a year to over 4 million students. In 1994, the program was reauthorized according to the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), which carries with it a number of revised legislative expectations. In addition, the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act vastly increases the number of schools eligible to operate schoolwide programs. This new legislation expands opportunities for schools operating schoolwide programs to integrate their services, strategies, and resources—including federal, state, and local resources—to comprehensively reform the entire institutional program to meet the needs of all children in the school.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the legislative intent and expectation of the Schoolwide Program provisions of the IASA. Summary statements on the specific legislative expectations are provided in shaded boxes. The statements are followed by questions which can be used by administrators, teachers, and other school staff involved in implementing schoolwide programs to reflect on their activities in the context of what is expected by the legislation. By fostering an increased and common awareness of these legislative expectations among professional educators, this document also has the potential to better facilitate the implementation of schoolwide programs by schools and districts. Finally, this document can serve as a resource to better guide the technical support efforts of states and districts.

I. Basic Programmatic and Procedural Components of Schoolwide Programs

The Improving America's Schools Act embraces a new approach that seeks every opportunity to focus Part A dollars and other funds and resources on leveraging overall improvements of teaching and learning in schools with the highest levels of poverty. The legislation expects all schoolwide programs to include eight fundamental components that research suggests are essential to any high-functioning school.

- *Does your schoolwide program include the following components?*

1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school that is based on information on the performance of children in relation to state content and student performance standards.

2. Schoolwide reform strategies that:

   - Provide opportunities for all children to meet the state's proficient and advanced levels of student performance.

   - Are based on effective means of improving student achievement.

   - Use effective instructional strategies, including:

     (a) Increasing the amount and quality of learning time, such as an extended school year, before- and after-school programs, and summer programs.

     (b) Providing an enriched and accelerated curriculum.

     (c) Meeting the educational needs of historically underserved populations, including girls, students of color, and students in poverty.

   - Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of children of target populations in all programs included in the schoolwide program, and address how the school will determine if these needs are met. These programs may include counseling and mentoring services; college and career preparation, such as college and career guidance, and services to prepare students for the school-to-work transition; and the incorporation of gender-equitable methods and practices.

   - Are consistent with and designed to implement the state and local improvement plans, if any, approved under Title III of Goals 2000.

3. Instruction by highly qualified professional staff.

4. Professional development for teachers and aides, and where appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, principals, and other staff, to enable all children in the schoolwide program to meet the state's student performance standards.

5. Strategies to increase parental involvement, such as family literacy services.

6. Strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start and Even Start, to local elementary school programs.

7. Steps to include teachers in decisions regarding the use of assessments.

8. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering any of the state's standards during the school year will be provided with effective timely additional assistance, including:

   - Development of measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis, and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assistance.

   - Periodic training for teachers in how to identify difficulties and provide assistance to individual students and scheduling of teacher-parent conferences for any student who has not met the standards.

II. Additional Legislative Expectations

A. Student Performance

Schoolwide programs are expected to serve all children in a school and use Title I, Part A funds with other funds to upgrade a school's entire educational program.

Schools are expected to significantly improve the achievement of children who are at risk of school failure to achieve the high academic standards expected of all children.

Schools are expected to demonstrate gains in reading/language arts and math which match other students in their state.

The new provisions support serving particular groups, especially those children who are limited English proficient; migrant; enrolled in preschool programs, including early childhood programs; homeless; and served by programs for the neglected and delinquent.

- *Are student performance goals for all students well-understood by teachers and other school staff?*
- *Do teachers and other school staff have a means to assess progress toward student performance goals?*
- *What progress has been made toward student performance goals for all students?*
- *Do school staff know how student performance in reading/language arts and math compares to student performance in other schools in the state?*

B. State Standards and Assessments

States are expected to develop and implement high standards to improve teaching and learning for all students. These standards should reflect the same knowledge, skills, and performance levels that are expected of all children and must cover at least mathematics and reading/language arts.

States are expected to develop performance standards which are aligned with the content standards and set three levels of performance to describe expectations for students' mastery of the knowledge and skills described in the content standards (i.e., partially proficient, proficient, and advanced).

Schools are expected to base schoolwide program activities on state standards as well as the specific needs of their students.

States are expected to adopt or develop student assessments in the same academic areas as their content and performance standards and use them to measure the yearly progress of Title I students, schools, and districts.

- *Are school staff aware of the progress their state has made toward developing, adopting, and implementing content and performance standards?*
- *Do school staff perceive coherence between content and performance standards?*
- *Are particular levels of performance used by school staff and recognized as meaningful?*
- *Do school staff use state standards in concert with approaches to meet the particular needs of their communities?*
- *Has the school integrated content and performance standards into school curricula?*
- *Are school staff aware of the progress states have made toward developing, adopting, and implementing student assessments?*
- *Do school staff perceive coherence between assessments and standards, and are assessments integrated into the school curricula?*
- *Has the system of content and performance standards and assessments affected teaching practices?*

C. Curriculum and Instruction

Schools are expected to expose all students to challenging subject matter and to use instructional time and resources effectively.

Schools are expected to use effective strategies to improve children's achievement in basic skills and core academic areas by increasing the amount and quality of learning time and emphasizing instruction by highly qualified staff.

Schools are expected to provide students who have difficulty mastering established standards with additional assistance that is timely and effective.

- *Are there increased opportunities for students to learn advanced curricula?*
- *Is there increased student participation in core academic subjects?*
- *Does the school provide extended school-year programs, before- and after-school programs, and/or summer programs?*
- *Are instructional time and classroom resources being used more effectively?*
- *Has the school increased the amount and quality of learning time, and does it promote instruction by highly qualified staff?*
- *Are students who have difficulty mastering established standards effectively identified, and are additional resources targeted appropriately?*

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D. Professional Development

Schools are expected to integrate professional development and assistance for improved teaching with other resources to address school and classroom needs for improvement.

Schools identified for school improvement (those not making adequate progress) are encouraged to devote substantial resources to professional development.

Schools are encouraged to provide a variety of professional development activities, including improving classroom instruction, training school staff to work more effectively with parents, and creating career ladder programs for paraprofessionals to enable them to become certified teachers.

Comprehensive federal technical assistance centers, organized regionally, are expected to provide coordinated assistance to school systems in implementing federal programs to support improved teaching and learning.

- *What types of professional development activities are supported in the school (e.g., topics, nature of training, and activities)?*
- *Have professional development efforts been integrated with other resources to address school and classroom needs for improvement?*
- *Are professional development activities reflected in school curricula and/or teaching practices?*
- *If the school has been identified for school improvement, has it devoted substantial resources to professional development?*
- *Are school staff aware of, and do they take advantage of, resources available through federal technical assistance centers?*
- *Are professional development activities aligned with state content and performance standards?*
- *Are professional development activities driven by the needs of target populations, and do they promote strategies to engage students and their families in learning?*

E. Parent and Community Involvement

Schools are expected to develop a written parent involvement policy with the help of school districts and parents to address methods to involve parents in a timely and organized manner in the planning and improvement of school activities. Policy involvement includes developing the schoolwide plan and determining how schools will provide parents with information on expected student proficiency levels and school performance.

Schools are expected to establish school-parent compacts that identify shared responsibilities for high student performance and promote shared responsibility for learning and ongoing communication.

Schools are expected to offer training to build school and parent capacity for involvement, including literacy and parenting education. Schools should provide assistance to parents to support: (a) parents' understanding of the importance of challenging academic standards and how they can help their children meet them; (b) parents' monitoring of their children's progress; and (c) literacy or skills that help parents work with their children.

- *Has the school established a written parent involvement policy with input from the district, school staff, and parents?*
- *Do parents participate in the planning and improvement of school activities (e.g., developing the schoolwide plan, establishing a means by which school staff will provide information to parents)?*
- *How involved are families, and do they feel that the school is open and responsive to their involvement?*
- *Do staff perceive parents as more aware of what is expected of their children and what they can do to support their education?*
- *Are school-parent compacts established and used?*
    - *(a) Are they mutually developed by parents and school staff?*
    - *(b) Do they address academic and communication goals?*
    - *(c) Do they identify shared responsibilities for high student performance?*
    - *(d) Are they being used to improve the school-family partnership?*
- *What other methods does the school use to involve parents?*
- *Does the school provide training to build school and parent capacity for involvement (e.g., literacy and parenting education, family resource centers, education for school staff)?*

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- *Are there new or revised policies for school-parent communication that establish shared responsibilities?*
- *Are students better prepared for school? Is attendance improved? Is homework completed? Do students read outside of school?*

F. Resource Flexibility, System Supports, and Accountability

Schools are encouraged to view planning as an ongoing process based on student and school needs, rather than a bureaucratic procedure to satisfy administrative requirements.

Schools are encouraged to integrate federal, state, and local resources to improve the entire educational program based on the needs of students.

States are expected to establish a system of school support teams to assist schoolwide programs in helping all students meet state performance standards. States are also expected to establish a corps of distinguished educators to provide intensive and sustained assistance to schoolwide programs and to those schools and local education agencies that are furthest from meeting state student performance standards.

The federal government, states, and districts are expected to help schools understand the purpose and requirements of Title I (e.g., by distributing federal regulations, governing standards, and assessments; by developing and disseminating clear, coherent guidance).

A new authority enables the U.S. Department of Education to waive various statutory or regulatory provisions at the request of states, districts, or schools.

Schools are expected to demonstrate progress in narrowing the gap between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers in attaining state performance standards.

Schools are expected to improve the achievement of educationally disadvantaged students more effectively than a traditional Title I program.

Schools are encouraged to promote increased accountability to families and communities (e.g., by providing information on school performance to families and the community).

- *Are school plans based upon the needs of students?*
- *Are school staff and principals aware of, and do they take advantage of, additional flexibility in the use of program resources?*

- *Are federal, state, and local funds combined in ways that best meet the needs of both the students and the school?*
- *Are federal, state, and local resources being used in innovative and creative ways?*
- *Does the school receive assistance from school support teams or other state-established sources of support?*
- *Does the school receive information and clear, coherent guidance from the state and district to direct their efforts?*
- *Are school staff aware of any statutory or regulatory provisions that have been waived? Do these waivers impact the educational program at the school?*
- *Has the school made efforts to demonstrate its progress toward its goals in terms of state performance standards?*
- *Is there evidence that the achievement of educationally disadvantaged students has improved more than in comparable schools with traditional Title I programs?*
- *Is information about school performance made available to families and the community?*

Concluding Remarks

This document was prepared to provide a quick reference to the legislative expectations for guiding the implementation of the Title I Schoolwide Programs of the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). It is important to note that this document is not intended to replace the official statements about the Title I program in the IASA. Readers should refer to the original document of the IASA legislation for verification and clarification.

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About the Laboratory for Student Success

The Laboratory for Student Success (LSS), the mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory, aims to provide assistance to schools in the mid-Atlantic region, including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC, in their efforts to make significant improvements in achieving student success. One of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories established by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education, the LSS is comprised of an interdisciplinary team of experienced, talented, and practice-sensitive researchers, practitioners, and staff joined in the common cause of promoting student success. The LSS mission is to play a pivotal role in the educational reform process throughout the mid-Atlantic region to significantly improve the region's capacity for bringing about lasting improvements in the learning of its increasingly diverse student population.

The Laboratory's scope of work is grounded in the belief that all children have the capacity to learn, including and especially those who, for whatever reason, are at risk of academic failure. With this in mind, the LSS seeks to: (a) discover ways to build on student potential and resilience; (b) expand the knowledge base on what helps students succeed; and (c) determine how newly developed knowledge can best be put into action in classrooms.

For more information about the Laboratory for Student Success, contact Cynthia Smith, LSS Director of Information Services, at 800-892-5550, or access the LSS website at <http://www.temple.edu/LSS>.

This document serves as a resource for individuals involved in the implementation of Title I schoolwide programs—including administrators, teachers, and other school staff—to reflect on their activities in terms of recently revised federal legislative expectations.

LSS